# POEMS

of the Soil and Sea

BY

CHARLES A. WAGNER

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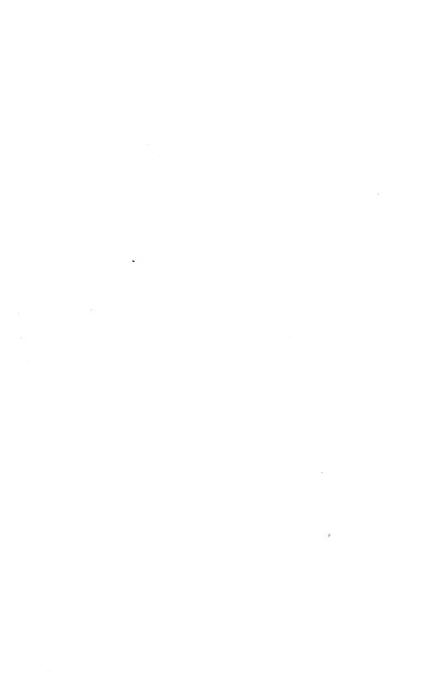


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of the Soil and Sea

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# POEMS of the Soil and Sea

By Charles A. Wagner



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# JOHN ERSKINE, Poet and Priest of Life, In the Academy . . . .



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## PROEM.

# To My Wife RUTH WARTERS

Vision of visions, Love of all love, Beautiful poem Sung from above

Somewhere and always
Song was your soul;
You are the poet,
Endless the scroll.

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# POEMS of the Soil and Sea



All summer have I sat in thought,
Burned my poor brain
And, through lamps of stars
Walked with the pain.
"It is not long" my soul would say,
"It is not long."
Soon Autumn will come down to me
Crazy with song,
She will toe-dance with Gypsy brown feet
Scratching, scratching along the street.

2

I will not say these books are dead, With summer bending at my door; A poet's spirit walks by day When sunlight falls upon the floor And sings from off the shelf, and lives; O we are all God's fugitives!

3

All night the twinkling needles wove A diamond dress of dew, An angry father, came the wind And tore the meshes through;

But silently the Prince of Light Stole up and snatched the naked sprite!

4

In the morning steadily
I walk down the lawn,
I thrust my bare feet through the dew
Happy I was born.

The quiet is a crystal cup

That splinters when the birds are up. . . .

5

When I went out to call the cows, I crossed a field half plowed, And suddenly I found that I Had walked into a cloud.

Like through a prayer I heard cow bells, A white dream covered me; I laughed, remembering how men Paint clouds in poetry!

6

You will look upon me now As I cross the last small field And never understand How I do not run to you, and yield.

If clouds flew quickly to the sun O God would burn them, every one; Green are the leaves of passion's crown, But love will wait till they are down. . . .

7

Climbing over a county of hills Is no play, And when a man is thirsty The rocks are in his way.

The sun set in a harbor Of waters lit like flame, But one must see a sunset For words are not the same.

There was a farmer lad more kind Than sixty sunsets are, He'd rather fetch a mug of milk Than gossip with a star!

8

Before I even knew
The blossoms died,
The trucks came rumbling down
Bulging barrels at the side,
In which the apples ride.

They should float apples down the river That men might recognize the Giver. . . .

9

Little grains of dust Blown from foreign lands, Clinging to earth forever, These are my hands,

O sad years in the house I know!
O dead leaves dropping on eternal snow!

ΙO

Through the barren orchard The sky is pale and sad, The trees are shriveled women Who once were color clad.

I try to tell them Spring will sew New blossoms that are white as snow. From the heart of the tender sparrow, From the throat of the careless jay One note was in the singing Of the flying-songs that day.

From the breath of the early lilac, From its pink and purple flower, One worried whispered fragrance That told the Day, the Hour . . .

And all the meadow-stations Stirred with the lovely word; Then suddenly the wind came down, Hid in the grass, and heard

And over the hills the warning went To the Valley and violet Wood, The rustling of the big-tops Told that it understood. . . .

From the sun on the dancing rivers, From the rim of the rising moon, Out of the liquid shadows One pastoral, one tune, Over the sleepy meadows
Into the trees it ran,
Thrilling branch and blade and bird
With one alarm: A Man! . . .

## III

Regret that I have known you . . . ?
Spring still blows . . .
Forget that I have found you
Like a rose . . . ?

Nay . . . I never shall forget That sweet smell— Only, I thought you freer, Wilder dwell.

Stay—stay within your garden Planted well, I dreamed of riot-blossoms In a dell,

I did not dream of gardens—
(What a fate
To lie a million ages
Near a gate. . . .)

Look, love, how the gentle moon Wanders stately through the trees, And the little stars that trail Are like blossoms torn from these.

We are blossoms of the sod Torn with stately hands from God, Taken from His eager bed, By His gentle fingers led

And His ways are all too soon Those of stars that trail the moon. Into the heart returns the fallen flower And none may see the broken pride That flows, except a heart that sprang From fallen flowers of the sunless tide. . . .

I have found loveliness where sunlight thrills Quietly living ivy on a wall, I have seen violets reach above a field And toss their tragic faces daisy-tall.

When these have fallen I alone may know, Each field, each farm, each cloud-swept bower, Into my heart the fallen blossoms blow, Into my heart returns the flower. Why do I love you? Ask me why Slim reeds go reaching For the sky. . . .

Why do I love you? Do I know What hidden dream makes Roses grow . . . ?

I have the reason, Soul and mind And the far purpose Of the wind. . . .

Why do I love you? Because I Can never tell you, That is why. . . .

## VII

A child, playing
With its mother's fingers. . . .
So too, O God,
Do I cling to Your Song
And seek Your beauty,
Knowing, ah knowing
That soon you too shall look down
And smile.

## VIII

Today there is a warning in the wind,
The dawn was not so silken-light before,
Today there is a spirit warm and kind
Waiting outside the sun-washed, eastern door,
Who whispers: "Take your green and gold
and blue,
Painter of Life, take them along with you!"

### IX

Histories do not speak of the green riot; It is not the clamoring of a land or a people, Nor rifle-shots from a barricaded street.

Each summer new sabers of green unsheath Their naked blades to the warm, golden air Under barrage of pointed tongues of flame.... Charging out over trails and tarry roads—

And there is no loud report of victory When tiny searching fingers of the ivy Reach over a telegraph pole. . . .

Here on the open highway once I trod When, in despair, I thought to find my God. I plucked the painted flowers from the ground, Laughed with the wind, answered its every sound.

I ate my fill of berries by the road, Drank beauty from a cup that overflowed In tiny moments of unended joy So that the skies became a running boy Shouting against the hills of silent blue, And joy and I were one lad, that I knew!

I flung my naked body in a lake And swam from shore to shore for swimming's sake.

I slept beneath a catafalque of stars
Until the morning with her colored bars
Came like a rose-cheeked girl who never
grieves,

Came tip-toeing, blowing to my bed of leaves, Came from the warm and unastonished South To set her feeble kiss upon my mouth. . . . The road was inland with safe lamps glowing Like dim-lit harbors of sails soft blowing.

Alas! I do not tramp the highway more, For, once, as I passed by an open door I heard a young girl playing in the night, And when I saw her in the parlor light Her face was shining with a golden dream. Misty as sunlit vapor did it seem, And as I looked upon her tiny hands I saw the sunshine of a million lands. The keys were washing waters that the rain Drove out upon the sea in silver stain. . . . Her mother came, and took the girl to bed, Blew out the lamps until the house was dead

The night—it hung its colored stars, and yet There was a light more beautifully set. The wind—it was so warm and sweet, and yet There was a sweeter one that I had met. The road—it was so good to me, and yet There was another road I can't forget.

When life has had enough of me And I am done with breath From silent skies and bending sea, I shall not dream of death.

I think if Autumn leaves can blow Into an open sky, And have a dance or two to show Before they curl and dry,

I who have known the blue-bird's cry And tree-top song, I shall not die!

## XII

Do not think that I shall hide Or God shall keep me at his side, For, restless as I was before So shall I be forevermore, And I shall laugh when winds annoy The peace of tree-tops into joy.

I shall be where rain-drops fall Along the ivy of the wall, And if you care to come to me Tap on the bark of any tree, And I shall hear you from above And know you haven't ceased to love.

Do not bring me wreaths of flowers
Or pray beside this little mound
For, with the first warm driving showers
I shall have risen from the ground!

## XIII

How the thought of you is a coming in From hot fields when the marble hours begin, The cool, cool hours of evening when the brown

Tree shadows turn their western faces down. . . .

How the thought of you is a sweet cool drink Out of the glistening well or at the brink When stars are in the bucket as you pull; I look in your heart and emerge brimming

full. . . .

#### XIV

Long did I wonder at the carpet of blue, O to plunge far down into its mystic waters And drown in a glory of dew. . . .

From somewhere came moving white-robed sails

And raced their changing shallops across the inverted sea

Stretching and urging in scattering splendor. . . .

I knew not which would win, for all were equally great and fleet,

But soon one lone sail remained of all the contest,

One did not part and melt, like snow that falls in the sea. . . .

One rolled on and on, breaking each delicate fleecy thread

Until the race was won
And the medallion of gold. . . .

I must helplessly cling to earth And the young, frail, new-budding trees

[19]

Sway in despair with me. . . . We have a common desire,
We would roam the silken waters of the misty
Heavens,
Rootless and branchless, and at last be free;

On Earth the smallest sparrow Brings Jealousy. . . .

### XV

I take the road that leads me there, The quiet woods I know, No feet but mine have ever trod That pathway gemmed with snow.

All year the sun sleeps on the stones, The air is still and mild, There is a trembling quiet like The dreaming of a child.

Here sorrows do not ever walk Nor pain nor any fears, There's never a time the quiet woods Have failed to dry my tears.

Only once there was a stirring In that silent place, In wonderment I stood and watched The storm clouds spread and race

Through tree tops maddened with the wind And furious and wild;
There was no quiet then, no dream Resembling any child.

[21]

Somewhere I knew another's heart Had caught unconquered woe; Tossing of quiet woods, and storm, Melted eternal snow,

These are not written for the fields; Rage in a quiet wood, O I have read your lips at last, O I have understood!

### XVI

Magic of white sunlight on green Is over now. . . . Only whispers of blue between The grass, and how

A sky brings home her tired flocks From crimson halls. As Night takes down her jeweled box Silver dust falls. . . .

But you have laughed with love, you seem Out of Time's care, And moon-white roses in a dream Are not so fair. . . .

All June lies sunken, with her skies And her bright bars; Are you an angel, that your eyes Are pools of stars . . . ?

# XVII

Moments are tiny fireflies Signalling to my soul, Flickering fireflies In the twilight. . . .

The muscles of a bird's throat
Moving in song,
The faint whispers of a lost love
Which say: "I have time to linger
In your dream, and you may touch me yet a
while—

Until your own cry wakes you, you may touch me"

Moments are snowy branches Broken by the winds. . . .

O the sunspilling sweeps
Of a church organ,
O the flying journeys
And the singing meadow-maidens
And the endless procession
Of warm Beauty. . . .

[24]

Give me such voice that I Might split the sky; Out of the storm and thunder Does music fly. . . .

Your fires, O Soul, are moments Kindled with pain; Tears do not ease desire Nor can the rain. . . .

# XVIII

Last night there lit upon my bed A pale blue spectre, cold and dread. I thought it wore a mantle new And heavy with a crystal dew. Its feet and hands like elfin thieves I knew had been a'chasing leaves. It had a way of giving pain And smelling sweetly of the rain. It whispered with its purple lips Of flying foam and tossing ships And bending over me, it said: "The summer that you love is dead! . . . Dawn will not step across the dew With pink-white toe or velvet shoe, Nor will blue blossoms strew the air, Or golden flowers toss their hair Again . . . the trees will all be bare, And winds will hold loud meetings there! . . . "

# XIX

Shadows have music too, and shadows know Passion and sensibility and pain.
Half of my life across the snow I throw In shadow. . . . It shall dwell with me again When Spring, the blossom-haunted, walks the earth.

Blessing the meadows with a song of birth.

# XX

TO R. W.

I will turn back an hour, today
I will steal down a lovely way
Hazy with gold and tender blue;
In fancy I will walk with you
Again. . . . It will be good to see
Your face lit up with melody. . . .

In the low hills your laughter rang Against white fog—. Always you sang With simple meaning, yet apart—You sang the beauty of your heart, And in your eyes there was a gleam Of light half militant, half dream.

The book that we had partly read,
The dead sage slumbers still, the red
Leaf keeps the page, and drooped and dry
A trembling violet tries to die.
Life Giver, touch again this flower
With Spring . . . !

I will turn back an hour, And in the everlasting dew Fancy will let me walk with you. . . .

[28]

#### XXI

Show me the lips that know no hour of song
When sunlight falls on green with hot embrace,
When violets hide, and daisies bravely throng,
And cushion-clouds are trailing in blue
space.

The year flaunts green and gold and blue to turn With laughing eyes our semblance from the dead, And summer gathers these to flame and burn In tireless vigil, like a torch of red.

O Spring's a little girl with pink-white toes,
But Summer thrills the fingers of a root,
Her lips are smoother than the dewy rose;
In her warm arms the trees toss down their fruit.

# IIXX

Each year ten thousand people ride
In summer to the country side,
They come in silk and satin gown
Treading the lovely woodland down
So that a farmer lad must creep
In shame behind his careless sheep,
So that the stars rain in the dew
A tearful silver retinue,
So that the valley looking up
With hotel lights within its cup
Asks God for simple folk again
Who take their bread and butter plain.

### XXIII

Two farmers lived in a small town
With furrowed land a'sloping down
The valley; both were giant men
And could turn over ground for ten.
Ploughing a field or pitching hay
Was nothing more than so much play.
The buzz-saws sang without a stop
Down at the mill, when they would chop.
Vermont snow storms went sweeping by
Unheeded . . . their wood-piles were high. . . .

But one of them, the one named Brown When chores were done, he would steal down A book or two, and in the light Of an oil lamp would read all night. . . . They say that he was seen to be Once in the County Library. . . .

The other man named Roy is dead;
Blue flowers grow above his head. . . .
Brown's bed is overgrown with weed—
Brown wrote a little book on "Seed". . . .

#### XXIV

Dead summer leaves upon the forest floor, Oft, when your maples swayed contentedly, Proud with their burden, did your accents pour Blessed o'er me. . . .

What Might am I, or by what fabled charm Given my feet to trample your long sleep? Yet would you bid me step in no alarm Soft, ankle-deep

Into your bosom that has combed the wind, What though the sun, of bitterness in rain Leaving for tears, sweet sap of Faith entwined To flow again!

Hushed in the holy stillness of your might, Yours is the charity of God. I see In your dry midst of fallen leaves that light He made to be. . . .

# XXV

My soul is a purple cavern
Open for them that pass,
Flowers that life has relinquished,
Violets smothered by grass,
Wind in the hills, night forsaken
Dawns all dewy with tears;
My soul is a purple cavern
Heavy and sad as the years.

### XXVI

In the quiet valley
The sun found gossip:
"Do you know" asked a brown blade of grass
Of its green neighbor,

"Do you know whether winter has passed?"
"What is winter?" asked the green blade.

Hill trees whispered something about a moon Taking the sky far off,
And the truant sun said to the hill-flowers:
"The moon shall come here searching for my secrets,
But tell him nothing. I her you"

But tell him nothing, I beg you"
And she stole away over the mountains.

When the moon with silver lips that night Whistled down to the flowers
They were shut tight,
Feigning sleep.
A million fire-flies signalled to him—
But he thought they were only
Mocking the stars.

# XXVII

I shall be turning down unending lanes Of loveliness, and singing as I go, The quiet flowers shall consult the wind Of this strange wanderer who dares to know The secret of God's tranquil ways below.

I shall be asking of the wind no tune, Nor of the roadside flower any sweet, Only my voice shall tell my soul's power, Only my heart shall quicken at His feet Where poets long before found strange retreat.

# XXVIII

I pounded on the iron gates That open from within, A voice in that strange sanctum said: "You may not enter in."

I pounded harder (feet and hands) Restless as a dream, I shouted through the spiked bars That muffled every scream. . . .

Dawn came like peace, the bars grew soft, The gateman's bolt undid, The gates fell forward on the path As every cross-bar slid.

My face, so wet with young love's tears Turned not from easy flight But, like a cave soul given wings, Stepped gladly in the light.

I might have been more hesitant, The years ahead shall say. Walls do not yield as easily To love, as to decay; A gate moves but one way. . . .

## XXIX

When strangely still this heart shall lie, For all the roving blue Of some warm, deep Autumnal sky, I shall not think of you. . . .

When grasses seek to grow above A white, consenting brow And wonder-eyed, the daisies shove Unseen, I may know how In darkness to despatch my love This way or that. . . . How can I now. . .?

#### XXX

The years shall thunder by, The years of pain; Sorrow shall beat her wings In vain—in vain,

For Time's the fleet shadow Of a white cloud, That does not cross the hill Till the field's plowed. . . .

And like a plow in Spring Laughs to the sod, Time floats across the sky To smile on God. . . .

Deep is the furrow made! The daisies droop Under the turning earth As martyrs stoop.

To print a clean, white kiss Upon Earth's hand, And then go down and dream Their Purple Land. . . .

[38]

The years shall wander by, The years of pain, And Love shall have her day Again—again. . . .

#### XXXI

A tomb-like silence is upon the streets; The hours, so dark, will soon be sprinkling gray. . . .

Dead world! why is there no completed peace, But struggling sleep-sounds begging dawn away . . . ?

I hear my soul astir, I feel it speak Somewhere on some cool ship where I lie stretched,

Where Love is one with Peace, and each is rest. . . .

Along whose dreamy sails my life is sketched

A heavy wagon on some far-off street
Is jolting slowly across the cobble-stone;
Then come the ringing heels on the flint walk
That never failed their nightly measured tone,
And now the window-purple flits within,
I see it rolling balls of mist, before
The struggle with the midnight in my room
To leave the early light upon the floor. . . .

Come, purple banners of the silken dawn,

[40]

Lighter than kisses come with dew-sweet
lips
To heal in coolness these, my fevered eyes
(White ships are whispering to eager
skies)
Until I see the slanting sails of ships
Buoyant and bravely bending out to sea
Again Bravely and boldly I will go
I do not know what lands may greet me
then—?
My one joy is I do not want to know

# XXXII

God weaved a tapestry
Of pink coral and green,
And spread it over the sea,
But your radiance has faded it;
Which is more than the sun could do,
Or the marring prows of ships. . . .

## XXXIII

I'll have music to send me away,
O the winds
With their soft violins that will play,
And the trees
That will stir like a chorus that day. . . .

No processions of people will crowd At the pier, There'll be nothing discordant and loud As I near,

But my soul will go bravely and proud Without fear
Like a ship that slips noiseless away
Down the bay. . . .

#### XXXIV

I shall go down to the shore And watch the sea-gulls there, And all the wavy waters Shall glisten in my hair,

I shall walk into sunsets, Open fires of the West And ease my heart with beauty That lets me lie and rest. . . .

Better than the cold kisses Of your unyielding mouth Shall be the wind upon my face That thrilled the tropic South,

And sweeter than your singing Shall sing the slanting rain, Because hers is a melody That does not end in pain.

When rain collects her music And steps down from the sky She kisses all the flowers And sets white clouds to fly, She sprinkles all the meadows With perfume from above; The rain knows more than you do Of music and of Love. . . .

# XXXV

I remember a yellow butterfly
Searching along Broadway
For some meadow.
But my pity vanished
When it fluttered by a florist's window
And would not even look in. . . .

# XXXVI

The town where my love lives Is a quiet town, The trees wait and listen And no sound comes down,

The streets have a holy Heavenly whiteness, Often I've seen there God's torch of brightness.

How the wind saddens When it runs there, Finds nothing but petals And green willow hair,

Finds no voice but sunlight Ready to sing, Uttering notes that The higher winds bring.

I take my chair there And sit by her door, And all that my love sings I know from before.

[47]

No one can see her, White is the door, Green is the carpet Spread on the floor,

Golden the windows, Easy the knob, Turning upon the First little sob.

Only I see her, Only I hear, Night does not fill me With any fear,

The town where my love lies Is a high town,
Only the living
Ever come down.

## XXXVII

Cool autumn works no changes here, She does not paint green leaves to red, Ah no, these things have vanished now, The Indians that once danced are dead, The white, broad days of sun have fled.

A squaw with earthen bowl would sit All day upon this spot and be Content with blue warmth in the air, And white birds flung themselves to sea Like stitched upon a tapestry.

There was a whisper in the roar,
The sunless street swarmed gray and old,
"Peace will not soon return again"
The ancient roots and ivy bold
Their million hovering spirits told,
Dreaming of amber and of gold.

And suddenly a calm came down
And tired peace began to creep
Into the tortured places where
The noises had gone down most deep;
I thought I heard the weary arms
Of Indians, stirred in troubled sleep. . . .

# XXXVIII

Far in Virginia's eyes I see
The shining wealth of Italy
Upon whose diamond hills the sun
Plays with the sea in unison.
Those eyes are tales that sailors tell
When ships are mounting in the swell,
And in her dream-lit hair, lost showers
Of ancient gardens store their flowers.

Is it as well that she live here
Pale and contented as the beer
Which her old father drinks at night
Long after turning down the light?
What of the wine her lips once knew,
The purple grapes her fathers grew?
What of the marble of her arms
Swaying in pastorals and psalms,

What of her ashen colored toes That are ten pearls in slender rows? Ah, she is far too rare and fine For hanging clothes upon a line!

## XXXIX

The sudden glimpse of a faun, Your slender body, and your eyes, Are these things beautiful Like the beauty of quiet waters Taking on dawn?

Beauty of quiet waters Taking on dawn, How shall I tell your beauty Above body or eyes Or a sudden faun?

## XXXX

Faint blossoms that fade and fall
Are the fading tattered clouds,
And bitter is the wind on the Connecticut;
Soon night will come,
And the young stars will tell stories,
Their eyes glistening with tears of laughter,
But the older ones will stand by and listen
Unmoved. . . .

Until the fields have begun their twilight dreams,
Until the tall corn has stopped its playing,
Until the lamps are lit in the tiny farm-houses
And the young boys have brought in the cows,
The sunset lingers. . . .

# XXXXI

### **RUTH**

Whether I go from this eternal Vast
Into another, it is one to me.
It was enough, at flight, that I could dip
My wings in rhythm to the song of You,
Enough that, when the storm was at its height
And for the first time, cold winds sought me
down,

It was your lovely breast, your summer heart, That made my soul a nest, and gave me warmth. . . .

Our Youth which lives beyond the touch of years,

Stained with the wine of Music without end Is Dream Eternal. . . . I recall the day As clearly as hill-trees painted against A sky of marching clouds . . . still do I say Love is for Silence and for Prayer . . . we lie

Above the houses with their mortal noise, Wrapped in the peace God sends to Love and Hills

Above the shadows . . . still in one embrace I take you with me to Eternity! . . .

#### XXXXII

The tall men run the harbor, They stand before the wheel With lifted faces that the sky Took centuries to heal

Of paleness, for the land is lean And men find burdens there, But the sea will toss her cargoes Easily in the air.

The small men walk and talk and walk But never do a thing, The tall men curl the ropes to deck And as they work they sing.

The harbor likes tall men to sing More than the green ocean, (Harbors and their lamps are altars Where ships come for devotion.)

The small men keep the long long lists, They keep them straight and neat, But the tall men keep the harbor And kneel down at its feet. The small men sit and count and count And never sing at all, And yet they seem to know the sea And how the whistles call.

There is a prayer in the tide Which only tall men hear, The tall pines know it just before A storm approaches near.

And sometimes in a morning field A word comes down from God And only the tall, thin daisies Will understand and nod.

The tall men run the harbor, They stand before the wheel Like singing priests; their voices are Cathedral organ-peal. . . .

## XXXXIII

I

This is the sorrow that returns to me Always when I have been away from you, Beautiful sea, God's book of holidays, Turning white parchments under lamps of blue.

Let me not walk the grainy lands too long, For my heart fills itself with dust and death, And pallid streets, and cities, and brown roads Lead me but back again to your brave breath.

There is a path that does not ever end Where earth paths end, in flowers eased with dew,

There is a silent trail no traveller Has stumbled on, where no bee ever flew.

There is a journey that is never done, There is a brook whose sound no pebbles play, This is the sorrow that returns to me, This is the weeping tears can not allay. You who have found the valley and the hill, How I should like to be of you once more, Who, tired or timid of the trees and flowers, Make a soft bed upon the forest floor.

Bright are the hills at dawning, bright and still The steaming valleys in the quiet morn, And on the hillsides bloom the violets—Light-headed, girlish flowers, million born.

This is the sorrow that returns to me, Always my heart is crying with that pain, There is no ending of the wave, no shore That does not lead me back to you again.

If I have known your beauty, you have robbed For that sweet treasure, all my ancient rest, The proud, swift joy of plowing up a field, The harvest glow of faces in the west,

The silver morning wind, the start of rain Among the trees, the crow's call in the sky, The grass-enchanted hillside where sleep comes Like the coming of a small butterfly.

Rain sweeps the decks with foaming, angry fear,

There is no fireside shelter for a crew; This is the sorrow that returns to me, Beautiful sea, when I am thrilled with you! Aching and tired, a ship crawls into port
With crumpled sails, like a torn butterfly.
Pinned to a post she lies, and when the sun
Warms her, and soothes her pain, she does
not cry

As one too young for burdened conquering; She rears her head, shakes off the ready tear, Breathes of the harbor till her wings are full, And seeks your arms again, forgetting fear. Where is the laughter of your early promises That tore my easy love from earth to you? Where is the hill that hides you from my heart, Where is the passion that your rhythm grew?

If I could find desire in your eyes, If I could touch your lips, my soul would rest, But in your wanton love there is no goal, In your embrace a darker dream is pressed.

Your eyes are sunken caves of bravery, Your lips are dead fires after long, long rain; This is the sorrow that returns to me, Always my heart is crying with that pain.

If I could catch your laughter in my ears, If I could bind your bosom to my heart! This is the sorrow that returns to me, Always that fearful dream will not depart.

#### XXXXIV

Always the wave turns back upon the shore After long days of open sea and sun, Stretching wide arms on warming sands once more

To feel the magic of oblivion,

For though the riding seas are crowned in gold And toss their changing sides in deep delight, There are no sands for rest, no shells to hold, No songs to play along the beach at night. . . .

They say the wind is made of air and foam; I think the wind is God's compelling hands
That send the sailor to his island home
More eager than dull waves on glistening
strands.

### XXXXV

#### **MOTHER**

Over the paleness of your saint-like face Let no pain mar that tiredness and grace Which none may understand save those who race

Timeless and poet-wise and music limbed.

Over your eyes some Heaven unbedimmed, Mounting new angels of your Godlike Good, And on that forehead white with solitude Let no sorrow again be understood.

You are my dream, my book of God, my song, In your sweet soul my poems all belong.

















# POEMS

of the Soil and Sea

BY CHARLES A. WAGNER